



The Straw.

By Rhina Ramsay. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$1.50.

As a vivid and strongly written book, with the picturesque country in which the high-class hunting set of England are wont to take their diversions and have their meals for a setting, with the view-halloo of the hunt, the bell-like music of the hounds breaking cover, and the rush of the riders to give it exhilaration, Miss Ramsay's novel is remarkable as the production of a young writer whose powers are revealed for the first time through her authorship to American readers.

If her choice of environment shows her judgment in selection, her skill in depicting character renders the pictures she has drawn against her environment especially clear and interesting. The different elements that go to form a hunting community, the passions animating its men and women that come strongly to the surface, the sacrifice of the weak and untutored to the selfish and the designing; the contrast between the manly and the womanly, between innocence and gentleness and worn experience, are set down with no uncertainty of touch, with no faltering of the delineator.

The book title, "The Straw," is exemplified in the person of its heroine, a young English girl, orphaned and an heiress, who falls a victim to the match-making proclivities of her cousin Lady Burkinshaw, known among her intimates in the hunting field as "Maria." Through a foolish idea of reforming a sorry specimen of the opposite sex, reduced to desperate straits for money, and by appeal to the desire for self-sacrifice inherent in a young and ignorant girl who responded to the dire necessity of a man asking for her help, she succeeded in marrying her protegee to William Lander, familiarly known as "Bill," who took his wife and gave nothing in return when he claimed his bride.

Of a violent and brutal nature, what little affection Lander was capable of feeling had long been given to another woman, Lady Sophia Bland. She said of herself that she was the one person who understood Lander.

For his sake she had divorced her husband and had incurred the censure, even of a sporting circle, where standards were tolerant and criticism not easily deserved. But Sophia Bland had her good points. Lander had none. Sophia would have been loyal had Lander permitted her to be. He was loyal to nothing and nobody. Only after his marriage had raised a barrier of separation between him and Sophia did he find that he could not live without her, and turn his baffled fury loose on the unfeeling girl who stood between them. Sophia Bland's child, though she does not come forward prominently at all, is an unusual figure, who scores by reason of her impatience and her mischievous desire to set people and things by the ears.

Every character mentioned in the book is individualized by some skillful touch of the author. Aside from those who are the main actors, the most important person is Tokenhouse, wrecked by an accident in the hunting field two years before the story opens and, since then, condemned

to be an onlooker at the activity around him, knowing men and women as he knows the fox they chase, and watching the one and the other with the same wary and understanding eye.

The Point to Point race, in which Tokenhouse comes back to life by riding his friend's horse to victory, leads up to the climax of the story, in which Tokenhouse again suffers. Taking it all in all, while they are not here or heroine, none contribute more to what the book undoubtedly possesses of genuine interest than Tokenhouse and Sophia Bland, and the telling of a secret by the former to the latter brings the novel to a most dramatic ending.

Mad Barbara.

By Warwick Deeping. Harper & Brothers, New York. \$1.50.

Mr. Deeping has here written a stirring romance constructed with no little ingenuity in the "patch-and-powder" style of the seventeenth century.

"Mad Barbara" is Barbara, the daughter of Sir Lionel Purcell, done to death in the music room of his London mansion, overlooking the park of St. James. She is not "Mad Barbara" at all in reality, but brooding over her father's death and his undiscovered murderer has set her apart from the society of young people of her age and station, and their amusements and pleasures.

By accident she is put in possession of a clue enabling her to solve the mystery that has overshadowed her young years. The man whose shameful secret is thus laid bare accuses her of insanity, and has her put in solitary confinement. Her reason and life are saved through the instrumentality of the man she loves. He discovers her prison and comes to her rescue at the last critical moment.

The action of the book and the picture it discloses of gay society life in London are full of interest; the peep given into the salon of Hortense Mancini and the duel fought between Philip of Pembroke and John Gore being among the most picturesque scenes described.

The romance closes with the discovery of the Oates conspiracy and the punishment of the leaders, among whom is Sir Stephen Gore, a dominant character throughout the book.

54-60 or Fight.

By Emerson Hough. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis. \$1.50.

The old campaign cry of a presidential election, referring to a disputed boundary line between England and the United States, has been taken upon by Emerson Hough as the basis and title of his new novel.

Washington, the national capital, and Oregon, of the far Northwest, with brief intervals in Montreal, Canada, and Mexico, witness the enacting of its drama. The hero of the story and the confidential secretary of John C. Calhoun, is Nicholas Trist, a young Kentuckian with a diplomatic turn of mind.

The events in which John C. Calhoun and Nicholas Trist are concerned have much to do with shaping the policy by which Texas becomes a part of the United States, by which a vast Northwest realm is acquired and which the Mexican treaty, ending the California to the United States, is signed.

In the diplomatic manoeuvres carried on before such big problems are solved many vital incidents take place in which Calhoun, James K. Polk, Sir Richard Pakenham, the English representative, John Tyler, President of the United States and General Taylor of Mexico, bear a hand with Calhoun, the book declares, as the master mind and the ruling spirit.

The three women who count in the book are Elizabeth Churchill, beloved of Nicholas Trist and eventually his wife; Helena, Baron von Ritz, infinitely alluring, indiscreet, noble and pathetic; and Senora Lucrezia Yturrio, whose gratitude to John C. Calhoun for his help in an hour of distress is an important factor in the signing of the treaty with which the war between Mexico and the United States ends.

The picture drawn of Elizabeth Churchill renders her a typical young girl of her day, belonging to the best social classes. The interrupted wedding scene between herself and Nicholas Trist is one of the most vivid incidents of the book. Others are found in the meeting of her with the baroness von Ritz in Montreal, Canada, and again in Oregon, where the baroness unfolds to a sympathetic ear the sorrowful story of her early life.

The book deals with the personality of men who have made American history. In a very attractive way, bringing readers face to face with their inner lives and the motives out of which sprang their hopes and ambitions. The personal and romantic side of the story is cleverly presented, and the connection of the novel with the art of the novelist born and not made.

In the Valley of the Shadows.

By Thomas Lee Woolwine. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. \$1.

The author of this story of love and life in the Tennessee mountains has recently individualized himself as the new regime district attorney of Los Angeles, and a man successful professionally and in politics as well as in law. The color illustrations for his story, in which love proves stronger than hate and ends a feud of many years' standing, are made by Charles M. Relyea, and add much to the strength of the book.

BOOKS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

Legal and Historical Status of the Dred Scott Decision.

By Eibert William R. Ewing, LL.B. Cobden Publishing Company, of Washington, D.C.

The author of this book, attorney and counselor of the Supreme Court of the United States, has here given a history of the Dred Scott case and an examination of the opinion delivered by the Supreme Court of the United States March 6, 1857. The decision involved the most fundamental principles of government, and because of the questions on which the decision hinged, a history of the case and of its times, a correct estimate of the opinion and decision of the court, are indispensable to a correct comprehension of the most crucial period in American history.

was taken into the free States of Illinois and Minnesota. Minnesota was at that time a Territory, and the distinction is absolutely vital to a correct understanding of the decision. The next mistake is in assuming that Dred Scott married on "free soil." He married in the Territory, and whether or not it were "free soil" depended on the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise. The next important mistake is that Scott appealed from the State court to the Federal court. That is exactly what was not done. The most vital mistake is in declaring that the Supreme Court of the United States "decided" that it had no jurisdiction in this case.

"The Supreme Court decided that as an appellate court it had jurisdiction, and no lawyer of any ability whatever for one moment will dispute the fact. The question of jurisdiction affected the trial court alone. Such untruthful statements have done much to mislead the public in regard to the action of the court in deciding upon the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise. Another no less pardonable untruth is the statement that slaves could not sue in the United States courts. The court simply held that a slave or the descendant of a slave could sue in a Federal court as a citizen, assigning citizenship as the sole ground of jurisdiction.

"Dred Scott could have reached the Supreme Court in several ways other than through the channel of citizenship. Another inexcusable statement is that the court decided that neither free negroes nor their descendants could become citizens of the United States. No such decision was ever handed down by any court in the United States.

"The book in which these misstatements are made is indorsed upon its title page by fifteen professors of history in American universities and colleges and very prominent educators, among whom are Richard Heath Dabney, professor of history in the University of Virginia; Professor Kemp P. Battle, professor of history in the University of North Carolina; Professor J. H. T. McPherson, professor of history in the University of Georgia. When historic untruth comes to the South with such credentials, the imperative need of such an examination as is found in "Legal and Historical Status of the Dred Scott Decision" is apparent.

These mistakes are repeated by many historians of even greater prominence and influence and in addition are often found on even more serious. For instance, some of these mistakes are found in Harper's "Encyclopedia of United States History," edition of 1902. Again in Scribner's "Popular History of the United States," page 317, it is said: "The negro was the opinion of the Supreme Court that the negro was not and never could be a citizen of the United States."

Nothing could be further from the truth than this statement, and few things could be more prejudicial to a correct understanding of what the court really did do and of the position taken by the different sections of the country with reference to the decision. "Again in the delayed Constitutional and Political History of the United States," volume 6, page 46, Dr. H. von Holst, the eminent German scholar, it is said: "The opinion of the majority differed from one another in every argumentation and... constituted an inextricable tangle." When statements like these are made by eminent scholars of much influence upon the reading world, both in America and Europe, the imperative need of such chapters as the third, "The Opinion Read by Chief Justice Taney, the

judicial opinion of the court," is at once seen."

Prevent Sickness by Disinfection.

The medical authorities throughout the country are doing their utmost to encourage the general use of disinfectants in the home.

The idea that a disinfectant should only be used in sick rooms and toilets is a ridiculous one. If you use the house pure-clean by regular disinfection you probably won't have any sick rooms.

Whenever you scrub add a non-polluting preparation like CN Disinfectant to the water, and when you sweep or sweep, sprinkle it about. Flush the sinks and toilets with it, and keep your house healthy pure-clean as well as house-pleasant.

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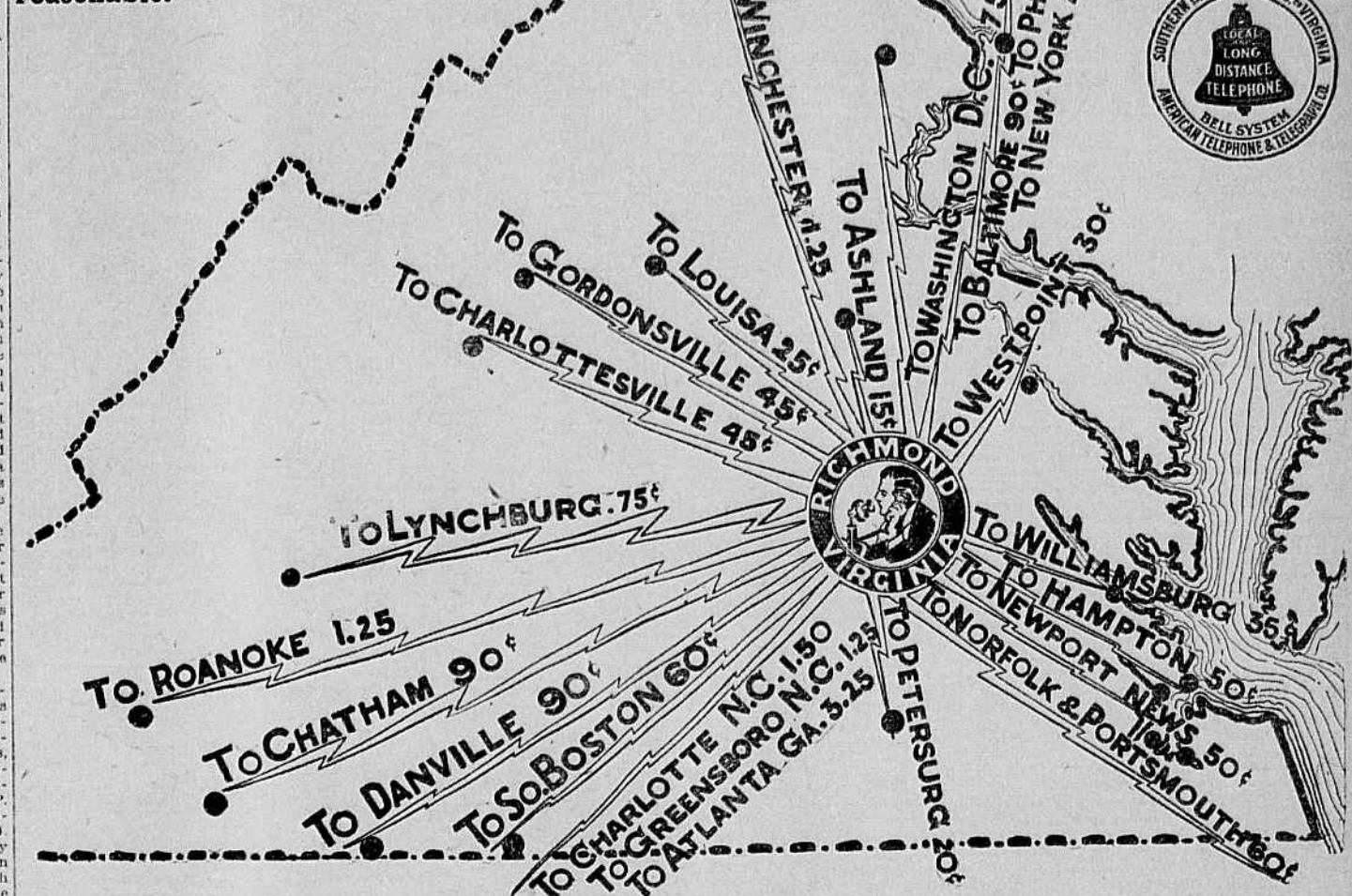
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Judicial Opinion of the Court, is at once seen."

An Address.

By William Alexander McCorkle, LL.D. G. P. Putnam's Sons, of New York.

This address on the "Patriotism of the South" was delivered June 17, 1908, before the literary societies of Washington and Lee University, and discusses his appointment on the Philippine Commission, will appear in this issue for the first time. In short, considering all the Century has to say about the different heads of the nation, the March publication may be called a White House number.

Sethur's for March.

Thomas Nelson Page's story, "John

Bears the Signature of

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The White House.

by William H. Crook. This issue will contain sketches of President-Elect Taft in regard to his administrative work in the Philippines, in regard also to his personality and the turning points in his career. Letters in which Mr. Taft declines the possible presidency of Yale and discusses his appointment on the Philippine Commission, will appear in this issue for the first time. In short, considering all the Century has to say about the different heads of the nation, the March publication may be called a White House number.

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